# Minerva

**Minerva** /məˈnɜːrvə/ (Latin: [mɪˈnɛrwa]; Etruscan: *Menrva*) is the Roman goddess of wisdom and strategic warfare, justice, law, victory, and the sponsor of arts, trade, and strategy. Minerva is not a patron of violence such as Mars, but of defensive war only. From the second century BC onward, the Ancient Romans equated her with the Greek goddess Athena. Minerva is one of the three Roman deities in the Capitoline Triad, along with Jupiter and Juno.

She was the virgin goddess of music, poetry, medicine, wisdom, commerce, weaving, and the crafts. She is often depicted with her sacred creature, an owl usually named as the owl of Minerva, which symbolised her association with wisdom and knowledge as well as, less frequently, the snake and the olive tree. Minerva is commonly depicted as tall with an athletic and muscular build, as well as wearing armour and carrying a spear. As the most important Roman goddess, she is highly revered, honored, and respected.

Marcus Terentius Varro considered her to be ideas and the plan for the universe personified. This thinking would eventually lead to the creation of the cult of *Minerva Omniscius*.

Minerva is revered as the patron god of the Gentes Heia.

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## Worship in Ancient Rome

Minerva was worshipped at many locations in Rome, most prominently as part of the Capitoline Triad. She was also worshipped at the Temple of Minerva Medica, and at the "Delubrum Minervae", a temple founded around 50 BC by Pompey on the site now occupied by the church of *Santa Maria sopra Minerva*.

The Romans celebrated her festival from March 19 to March 23 during the day which is called, in the neuter plural, Quinquatria, the fifth day after the Ides of March, the nineteenth, an artisans' holiday. This festival was of deepest importance to artists and craftsmen as she was the patron goddess of crafting and arts. According to Ovid (Fasti 3.809) the festival was 5 days long, and the first day was said to be the anniversary of Minerva's birth, so no blood was to be shed. The following four days were full of games of "drawn swords" in honour of Minerva's military

association. Suetonius tells us (Life of Domitian 4.4) that Domitian celebrated the Quinquatria by appointing a college of priests who were to stage plays and animal games in addition to poetry and oratory competitions. A lesser version, the *Minusculae Quinquatria*, was held on the Ides of June, June 13, by the flute-players, as Minerva was thought to have invented the flute. In 207 BC, a guild of poets and actors was formed to meet and make votive offerings at the temple of Minerva on the Aventine Hill. Among others, its members included Livius Andronicus. The Aventine sanctuary of Minerva continued to be an important center of the arts for much of the middle Roman Republic.

As *Minerva Medica*, she was the goddess of medicine and physicians. As *Minerva Achaea*, she was worshipped at Lucera in Apulia where votive gifts and arms said to be those of Diomedes were preserved in her temple.

We know due to the Acta Arvalia that a cow was sacrificed to Minerva on October 13 58 AD along with many other sacrifices to celebrate the anniversary of Nero coming to power. On January 3 81 AD, as a part of the New Year vows, two cows were sacrificed to Minerva (among many others) to secure the well-being of the emperor Titus, Domitian Caesar, Julia Augusta, and their children. On January 3 87 AD there is again record of a cow being sacrificed to Minerva among the many sacrifices made as a part of the New Year vows.

In *Fasti* III, Ovid called her the "goddess of a thousand works" due to all of the things she was associated with. Minerva was worshipped throughout Italy, and when she eventually became equated with the Greek goddess Athena, she also became a goddess of battle. Unlike Mars, god of war, she was sometimes portrayed with sword lowered, in sympathy for the recent dead, rather than raised in triumph and battle lust. In Rome her bellicose nature was emphasized less than elsewhere.

According to Livy's *History of Rome* (7.3), the annual nail marking the year, a process where the praetor maximus drove a nail into to formally keep track of the current year, happened in the temple of Minerva because she was thought to have invented numbers.

There is archaeological evidence to suggest that Minerva was worshipped not only in a formal civic fashion, but also by individuals on a more personal level.

# Interpretations of the goddess

## Minerva Medica

Interpretation of Minerva with a focus on the medical world. Unfortunately, much is unknown about this cult. Beyond being the goddess of doctors and physicians.

## Minerva Achaea

Another cult, about which little is known. But in ancient times, she was worshipped at Lucera in Apulia where votive gifts and arms said to be those of Diomedes were preserved in her temple.

## Minerva Omniscius

The cult of *Minerva Omniscius* is based in the ideas of the Ancient Roman scholar Marcus Terentius Varro who considered her to be ideas and the plan for the universe personified. It was founded in the year 2775 *(2022)* by the modern roman Kaseo Heius Totus. It is also heavily influenced by Greco-Buddhism.

It is a syncretic cult (Due to the amount of influences from different sources it has), which could, similar to Buddhism, be classified as a hybrid between religion and philosophical doctrine. However, it is compatible with Hellenism, Roman Way and other religions due to its henotheistic nature. For within their beliefs, they believe that *Minerva*, having been born from the head of Jupiter (hence his ideas) is the pure and perfect form of her father. Both gods, then, are considered equal. Different aspects of the same being.They also consider Bellona, the goddess of non-defensive warfare, to be simply a different aspect of Minerva.

Its motto is "Docendo discimus" (By teaching, we learn).

The festival of the goddess takes place from 19 to 23 Martius. Where concerts, talks about art, invitations to artists from other places, musicians, etc... are given. And art and knowledge are promoted (as well as the importance of its preservation). In times of crisis or conflict, military concerns may also be included if deemed necessary or if Minerva itself requires it.

## Concepts and values

- Oblivion and Ignorance are the greatest enemies of Humanity.
- Honour is the most basic form of respect.
- Sincerity is preferable to lying. It is only through truths that Minerva can be understood.
- The greatest expressions of divine acts are the pursuit, creation, innovation, preservation and perfection of knowledge and culture.
- The omnisphere is where perfection and ideas exist. ( This concept is similar to Nirvana, mixed with Plato's world of ideas. )
- The ultimate goal of Humanity is to come to understand the glory of the Divinity through the tools of knowledge and not ignorance and superstition.
- Frontiers must be expanded to bring us ever closer to Minerva.
- Humanity has a divine duty to expand and diversify throughout the cosmos, as a way to reach all knowledge and thus come to understand Minerva.
- The omniversal expansion and search is necessary.
- Miracles do exist, but with reason.
- Meditation is a way of entering into communion with oneself, in order to have sufficient clarity to advance on the Path of Knowledge.
- Knowledge is liberation from suffering.
- Knowledge is accessed through questions.
- Knowledge is power. And power allows us to improve things around us.
- The mind is the master of matter.
- Helping others can be an experience or a way of further knowledge and self-improvement. As long as it does not excessively harm oneself.
- Faith is what gives us the strength to move forward.
- Attachment is not to be rejected, for it is the ultimate expression of desire, which, though it causes suffering, allows the human spirit to move to improve, learn and attain enlightenment through the Path of Knowledge.
- The search for knowledge is also done to help the happiness of Humanity.
- Rituals are part of faith, which gives us strength to move forward and achieve the ultimate goal. They are not the way to reach it, but a complement. They must evolve, along with us. Not be a barrier that prevents us from doing so.
- All religions are other manifestations of Minerva. So, one can take elements from them, in order to be better.
- Only at the frontier can the best of the humankind come out.
- The spirit is the spark of life.

- Sentience is the ability to learn the value of knowledge.
- Intellect is the understanding of knowledge.
- Sentience is the basest form of Intellect.
- The soul is the conscience of sentience.
- Comprehension is the key to all things.
- Perfection is the result of understanding and knowing everything.
- Fusion with created intelligence is necessary.

## Offerings and rituals

Beyond what was mentioned during her festival. To this cult of the goddess, the following offerings and rituals are usually made:

- Group meditations.
- Honouring one's ancestors and the knowledge they have bequeathed to one. As well as learning from their mistakes.
- Offerings with different oils and incenses.

## Beliefs

For the followers of *Minerva Omniscius*, there is only one sin as such, and that is ignorance. Since they share the view of several ancient Greek philosophers (Plato, Protagoras and Socrates) that this is the cause of all evil. And that sins such as those mentioned by Christianity, in reality, stem from a deep ignorance, therefore, the only way to truly eliminate them is to put an end to it.

Logo of the *Minerva Omniscius* missionaries made by **WackyFiasco**

Because of this, they believe in the inhuman goodness of human beings. Which, in case of crimes, makes them opt first for reformation / redemption, second for ostracism and third for the death of the criminal, as a way of returning her ignorant son to Minerva, so that he can be reincarnated as a better person.

A clear example would be ego and pride, from Buddhist and Christian perspectives. For the followers of *Minerva Omniscius*, the solution would not lie in detaching oneself from the self or punishing oneself, but in knowing oneself well enough to be self-critical and thus prevent these derived evils from affecting or destroying oneself.

They believe that the happiness that ignorance can bring is a lie, a trap set by ignorance to destroy them. Because, deep down, it is a barrier that prevents people from improving themselves and their fellow human beings. It is a barrier to greater, more authentic and better happiness.

In short, they believe that knowledge is sacred, and the more knowledge one possesses, the better it is, not only for oneself, but for the rest of humanity. This being the ideal way to attain Enlightenment and understand divinity. What would become known as the Path of Knowledge. The same would be true of art, which they see as a form of approach to divinity, change, and self-knowledge.

Another thing they consider is that if knowledge does a temporary evil, but in the long run it serves the greater good, it is not evil.

Because of this, the function of her missionaries is not to indoctrinate (as in the case of other religions) but to give general knowledge to those most in need and, with this, help them to prosper in life. Ignorance would also include neglect of the preservation of knowledge and art. It is for this reason that there is another branch of the missionaries, which is dedicated to the search and preservation of these, especially of materials that are "lost".

Within their beliefs, they share some aspects with the work of the Christian theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) with the difference that they do not believe in the christsphere, but in the divinesphere and believe that beyond this, there is the omnisphere place which would be an equivalent to Plato's world of ideas.

## Concept of evil

For the cult followers, there are only two great clear evils, from which they derive all the rest. One is the aforementioned ignorance, which is a sin, because it is something that is, to some extent, manageable. The other great evil, which must be fought, in spite of its magnitude (and to some extent is also related to ignorance, for it is the union of the two that causes the suffering of the world) is Oblivion.

## Similarities with Eastern philosophies / religions

The cult of *Minerva Omniscius* shares some aspects, not only with various strands of classical Greek philosophy, but also with Buddhism. For example, they believe that the Middle Way, moderation, is the right way to do things, as it allows seeing both sides of the same thing, and not to fall into ignorance, ignoring the possible benefits of one of them or the benefits that could be granted by the synthesis of both.

Another aspect they share with Buddhism is that they believe that the ego is also an evil and the cause of much of the pain. But they differ from the Buddhist method in the way they manage to eliminate it. As mentioned before, they believe that the best way to eliminate it is through self-knowledge and self-criticism.

Like Chondoism, they share the idea that paradise on earth must be created. For this would enable the whole of humanity to approach divinity through the study of knowledge, eliminating all the problems that hinder its access.

## Transhumanism

They support the idea of transhumanism, because it would allow the search for knowledge to expand, thanks to the improvement of medicine and technology. The only condition is that the human essence is maintained. Because if it is lost, so is the search for knowledge. In this area, they share traits with the political ideology known as Anarcho - Frontierism (https://polcompball.miraheze.org/wiki/Anarcho-Frontierism).

They also believe, because of the cult of being born in the Digital Age, that technology is there to serve us and not dominate us. For, being a slave to technology is another form of ignorance.

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**This page was last edited on 18 April 2022, at 05:38.**